BS01299

U.S. Application No. 09/995,648   Art Unit 2131
Response to March 18, 2005 Office Action

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0013] with the following amendment version:

> Referring to Figure 1, according to an embodiment of the present invention, clients serve validation requests to the application server 100 which then accesses storage mass 200 using a hierarchical rule-based system 500 (Figure 2). The validation application server 100 identifies and accesses the stored data and performs validation services associated with the validation requests. Preferably tables of validation functions, or rules, implement the validation data, which may preferably be stored in a storage mass such as an ORACLE® Oracle database. As described below, by utilizing a table-based storage system, the application server of the present invention can efficiently and dynamically perform validation services on validation requests provided by a number n of clients.

Please replace paragraph [0015] with the following amendment version:

> The validation data may be stored in a format such as ORACLE® Oracle or Lightweight Directory Access Protocol ("LDAP"). The information may be stored in another location or may be shared with other businesses. Preferably, validation data is stored in a table based system, more preferably in an ORACLE® Oracle database 200. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, use of an ORACLE® Oracle database allows for good performance, data integrity, and a wide variety of data management tools to administer the configuration data via an administration system 300. As will also be appreciated by those skilled in the art, ORACLE® Oracle database 200 may be represented by two or more databases located in separate geographical locations.